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**TITLE: Transition to Teaching: A Summary of the Pilot
Project with Oakland and San Diego School Districts**

_____ Action

XX Information

Strategic Plan Goal(s):

**Goal 1: Promote education excellence through the preparation and certification of
professional educators**

**Goal 6: Provide leadership in exploring multiple, high quality routes to prepare
professional educators for California's schools**

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Transition to Teaching: A Summary of the Pilot Project with Oakland and San Diego School Districts

Professional Services Division

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Executive Summary

Oakland and San Diego Unified School districts participated in a pilot project to determine the most productive steps to eliminate the use of emergency permits in these large school districts. When the pilot began in 2000, CCTC records showed 539 Emergency Permits or waivers in Oakland and 243 in San Diego. Currently there are 114 teachers on emergency permits in Oakland and 17 in San Diego. The Pilot identified five steps or strategies that were used by the districts to achieve these reductions. The assistant superintendents for human resources from each of the pilot districts, Dr. Deberie Gomez (San Diego) and Dr. Delores Lemon -Thomas (Oakland) will present summaries of their participation in the pilot project.

Policy(s) Issue to be Considered

What are the steps necessary to eliminate or greatly reduce the use of Emergency Permits and waivers in large school districts?

Fiscal Impact Statement

The costs of this pilot project were covered by the budgets of the Professional Services and Certification Assignments, and Waivers Divisions of the CCTC and the participating school districts. The costs to former emergency permit holders to move to full certification in the pilot districts were covered by a federal grant. These expenses include: tuition and books, career and academic advisement, exam preparation costs, exam fees, and credential application fees.

Transition to Teaching: A Summary of the Pilot Project with Oakland and San Diego School Districts

Introduction

Placing a qualified teacher in every classroom is a priority goal for the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing. At the initiation of two Commissioners, staff began to explore the question, “What would it take to eliminate or greatly reduce the necessity for emergency permits and credential waivers in large school districts?” Two districts, San Diego City Schools and Oakland Unified School District, volunteered to be part of a pilot project to examine the challenges and develop the strategies necessary to address this question.

Background

Oakland Unified School District is the sixth largest district in California with over 54,000 students. The district employs over 2,900 teachers. In 1999-2000, 74% of the teaching staff held full teaching credentials. Commission records identified 539 teachers on Emergency Permits or Waivers. In addition, the district had 740 teachers who were at or near retirement age. The district was having difficulty retaining its teaching staff and recruiting and employing fully certificated teachers. The district’s need for teachers is estimated at 400 new teachers every year for the next five years.

San Diego Unified School District is the second largest school district in the state with 142,000 students and 8,400 teachers. It is growing at a rate that requires the hiring of approximately 1,000 new teachers each year. About 97% of the district’s teachers are fully credentialed. The number of Emergency Permit and Waiver teachers reached three to four hundred in previous years, and on January 3, 2001, Commission records showed 243 waivers and emergency permit holders. Though these numbers were relatively low, the district was not satisfied and sought to lower its number of non-credentialed teachers.

Information gathered by the Commission’s Certification, Assignment and Waivers (CAW) Division and reported in 2000 and the 2001 Pre-intern Report to the Legislature, indicates that 60% of the persons who receive an Emergency Permit do not renew it after one year. A 1996 study of a statewide sample of emergency permit holders found that more than two-thirds of those who began teaching on a long term emergency permit never ultimately received a full, permanent credential. It was found that frequently those who did complete the requisite six semester units of coursework to renew their Emergency Permit were taking courses that were convenient and available. However these courses were not necessarily the courses they needed to demonstrate subject matter competence or provide them the pedagogical skills to improve their teaching.

In order to facilitate the transition from emergency permits to full certification, multiple preparation options are available. Most Emergency Permit holders lack one or more of the statutory prerequisites for entrance into a teacher preparation program. The most common missing prerequisite is demonstration of subject matter knowledge. In 1997 the CCTC sponsored, and Senator Jack Scott authored, legislation that would target Emergency Permit holders and launch the Pre-intern Program to provide focused, systematic preparation in subject matter. For those Emergency Permit holders who meet entrance requirements, internship programs provide a teacher preparation option where persons complete their credential program while being employed in a teaching position.

Both of the pilot districts participate in the Pre-intern and Intern programs. Each of the districts requested and was granted significant increases in the number of pre-interns in 2001-2002. Both Oakland and San Diego participate in five internship programs. In both cases the districts are partners in intern programs with a California State University, a University of California, private universities, as well as a District Intern program.

The Pilot Project Plan

Personnel from the human resources and professional development staffs of the two districts agreed to meet with the Commission's teacher development staff, including representatives from the Paraprofessional, Pre-intern, Intern, and Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment Programs, and Certification staff of the Commission. Representatives of the Northern and Southern California Teacher Recruitment Centers joined the group. The initial conversations centered on the appropriate roles for each of these entities. The role of the Commission staff was to gather data, provide accurate credential information, provide information about existing and potential funding opportunities, and seek external funds to cover the potential additional costs of the pilot project. Each of the districts took on the tasks of matching their records against those of the Commission and identifying those individuals who possessed emergency permits or waivers and the circumstances that caused the district to request those permits. The Teacher Recruitment Centers offered assistance in identifying individuals on emergency permits and supplying potential recruits to the districts. The participants elected to meet every two months to report progress and to arrange for mutual assistance.

Early activities in the pilot consisted of data collection and data reconciliation. One issue that caused the districts concern was the procedure that the Commission uses to count emergency permit holders. For example, an emergency permit may be issued for one year to an individual at the request of a school district. If that person leaves that district, and is replaced by another person for whom the district has requested an Emergency Permit, this is registered at the Commission as two emergency permits for that one-year time period even though they were employed for the same teaching slot. Similarly, if the district employs a teacher on an Emergency Permit and that same teacher clears their credential one month later, the Commission's statistics would continue to count that as an Emergency Permit teacher for the duration of that year. Another issue was that Limited Term Emergency Permits were issued to fully credentialed teachers who were meeting a temporary need of the district. In most cases these teachers were seeking appropriate

preparation to become fully authorized in a new assignment but they were already fully credentialed in at least one area. No differentiation is made in Commission statistics between persons in this circumstance and those without any kind of credential. This latter circumstance is prevalent in special education where many fully credentialed teachers are moving into special education from regular education. While it was not in dispute that they must eventually be fully credentialed to teach in special education, the districts requested that the CCTC consider them credentialed teachers, since they hold a teaching credential at all.

Oakland. In the first year of the pilot, Oakland Unified School District was able to reduce the number of emergency permits from 539 to 254. This was done primarily by increasing participation in alternative certification programs (pre-intern and intern programs). Ninety-seven (97) of those remaining on emergency permits could be accounted for in the following ways: persons counted twice for one position; limited assignment emergency permits; persons already enrolled in the student teaching phase of a teacher preparation program; or in a few cases, Emergency Permit holder who met all of the qualifications for a preliminary credential but who had not applied for the credential. Once all of these individuals were accounted for, 157 persons on emergency permits remained.

The district's credential analyst assisted by the human resources staff and the staff of the Northern California Recruitment Center scheduled an interview with every remaining Emergency Permit holder. The message that was given to the emergency permit holders was very clear, "If you are not making tangible, satisfactory progress toward full certification, you will not be employed by this district." In other words the district made moving into a pre-intern, intern, or other form of teacher preparation, where available, a condition of employment for the 2001-2002 school year.

For many this interview was the first conversation that the Emergency Permit holder had ever had about their credential situation. Many of the Emergency Permit holders were unaware of the options and opportunities that were available. For others, they were skeptical, even defiant. For some there were legitimate reasons for remaining on an emergency permit. Some of these reasons are still in the process of being resolved. For example, there is no internship in the area of special education offered by any of the colleges and universities that serve Oakland. Discussions have begun with education deans and special education faculty at East Bay colleges and universities, but these Emergency Permit holders are still without an intern program to enter.

As of December, 2001 these are the results of the efforts of Oakland Unified School District.

- 114 individuals still remain on Emergency Permits.
- Forty-nine (49) were converted to another credential, including 34 who were eligible for a professional clear credential.
- Seven (7) were placed in an intern program, and eight (8) were converted to pre-intern certificates.

- Thirty (30) persons who had held emergency permits were not offered contracts for 2001-02.
- Seventy-eight (78) emergency permits that were renewed, and thirty-six (36) new employees were hired on emergency permits. Of these, fifty (50) are waiting for availability of a special education internship program and five are seeking library media certification.

San Diego. San Diego began this pilot project with 243 persons on emergency permits or credential waivers. There were also another 60 persons on emergency permits in seventeen (17) charter schools authorized through San Diego City Schools. While San Diego City Schools initiated the conversation regarding this project with the Charter schools, the District does not have authority to engage them in the project. As with Oakland, the process began with identification of those who were on emergency permits. Each of these persons was sent a letter making it clear that satisfactory progress was necessary to maintain employment in the district. A general meeting was called to explain the options that would allow them to be contracted for the 2001-2002 school year. The letters and general meeting were followed by individual consultation sessions tailored to help candidates further understand their status and teacher preparation options available to them. All but seventeen of those serving on an emergency permit were able to be moved to a teacher preparation program. In 162 of the cases the Emergency Permit holders were moved into pre-intern programs, which places these candidates in an organized program to provide subject matter preparation and coherent and consistent local support for their teacher preparation program. Sixty-eight (68) of the Emergency Permit holders were eligible to move directly into one of the five intern programs that currently serve teachers in San Diego City Schools. While the District had availed itself of special education intern programs with two local State universities, they entered into a third intern program agreement with a local private institution that could provide a flexible program entry that this large urban district needed as they continued to hire teachers throughout the school year.

Eleven (11) of the seventeen (17) that remain on emergency permits are in the area of special education. Many of these are in low incidence disability areas, such as physically disabled, or deaf/hard of hearing, and there is no preparation program readily available to these candidates in the San Diego area. Six (6) of the individuals were seeking the library media credential for which emergency permit is the only option. The human resources personnel in San Diego City Schools, along with the staff of the Commission, are working to find innovative ways to fully prepare those teacher candidates who are not being adequately served by the existing program options. For example, discussions are occurring to explore using distance learning opportunities to provide instruction in low incidence special education areas. The district is also preparing to expand their district intern program into miscellaneous single subject areas for which there is no current intern program available with the universities.

As indicated earlier, library media teachers present an unusual challenge. There were four (4) of these teachers who were prepared and credentialed in other states. In the state where they were prepared, no regular multiple or single subject credential was required,

but in California a regular teaching credential is a prerequisite to the Library Media Credential. Therefore, these teachers were teaching in California under an emergency permit. The Commission staff was able to find a Title 5 option to authorize their service without an emergency permit.

Pilot Project Strategy

Five common strategies to identify and place emergency permit holders in appropriate programs emerge from this pilot project. These strategies are presented in Chart 1. The strategies that are listed in the chart and described below were identified based on the joint discussions held with Commission staff and the findings as each district explored their local procedures and options. Most of the strategies fall into the area of common sense. A goal of this pilot project was to develop a set of procedural strategies that could be used by other districts to reduce or eliminate emergency permits.

Chart 1 Strategies in the Transition to Teaching Pilot Project

- I Data Collection and Analysis**
- II Counseling of Candidates**
- III Collaboration and Information of Participants and Partners**
- IV Program Development and Transition**
- V Policy Mitigation and Program Support**

The first step for any district seeking to reduce emergency permits is to **collect data** on the persons who are not credentialed in the district. The pilot found that in some cases the data were not complete. Data held by different divisions did not match, and the data that the district had did not always match CCTC data. Some of the reasons for mismatched data were pointed out earlier in this report (e.g., double counting emergency permit holders who occupied the same teaching positions at different times of the year). Once the numbers were initially reconciled, the task turned to determining who these people were and what support each needed to move toward completing a credential.

The pilot districts found that one-on-one **counseling** was both critical and time consuming. Among the questions that were asked of the emergency permit holders were the following.

- In what university are you enrolled?
- Have you taken (and passed) the appropriate subject matter exam?
- What credential are you pursuing?

- Do you know what the renewal requirements for an emergency permit are?
- What are your career goals, and why did you decide to take a job on an emergency permit?
- Do you know about the opportunities that are available in this district to become fully credentialed?

The two districts reported that the answers that were given were extremely varied. Responses ranged from, “No I don’t know anything about the questions you are asking;” to “Why are you asking me these questions?” “Don’t you know that there is a shortage of teachers and you need me?” In both districts, at every level, the school board, the superintendent, and the human resources personnel, had agreed that moving persons from emergency permits was a priority and that moving toward full certification would be a condition of employment. For some of the Emergency Permit holders the incentive of continued employment was necessary for those individuals to agree to take the next step in the credential process. For many, they needed the assistance of people who understood the process of becoming a credentialed teacher. Often, according to the district’s reports, emergency permit holders are sincerely unaware of the options that exist for them to achieve the credential that they desire.

Early in this pilot project it became very clear **collaboration and sharing information among the participants and partners** was critical if this pilot was going to meet its goal. In some cases the communication channels were well established, but had not been the focus of current collaborative efforts. In some cases, the pilot project offered a new opportunity to establish or reestablish connections. The collaboration was a time of breaking down the myths and the barriers that were getting in the way of all partners. Besides those working in human resources, the district’s divisions that dealt with professional development needed to be involved, as did the special education staff. The Commission’s certification and professional services divisions supported the effort by assisting with data collection and analysis, clarifying policies and seeking supplementary funding opportunities. Also critical was the need for more robust relationships with the colleges and universities in each district’s service area. For both districts existing programs needed to be expanded, and new programs and relationships needed to be developed. Additional difficult issues that needed to be reconciled were also identified, such as capacity of the universities to expand programs and the ability of the large universities to provide the flexibility of program entry that is and will be needed to sustain this effort.

A finding of this joint exploration is that not all of the necessary infrastructure is in place to handle all of the needs for certificated teachers in all credential areas. The participants must **develop new teacher preparation programs and improve the transition mechanisms within existing programs**. For example, a need remains to expand the availability of Education Specialist Internships. Programs are not always available, and when they are, these programs do not offer preparation for teachers of low incidence disabilities. Internship programs are not available in all of the single subject areas.

Transitions from emergency to pre-intern and pre-intern to intern program are not happening efficiently and emergency permit holders do not know the range of program options that do exist. These issues require focused attention by districts and the Commission staff. In the case of Low Incidence Education Specialists, more innovative delivery systems must be implemented and supported since so few of these programs exist in California.

A number of challenges emerged in the pilot project discussions that involved the CCTC. Among the issues that surfaced, were limits in the length of pre-intern certificates, the lack of viable education specialist programs, and limitations in District Intern legislation that will not allow expansion to areas of greatest need, such as special education. The need to increase frequency of subject matter exam dates was also discussed. Another issue that was identified is how emergency permits are counted, particularly those emergency permits (limited assignment) in which the holder already holds a full credential. The group explored potential sources of **support and assistance** that could be made available to the districts. Besides assuring full access to state funds, including alternative certification funds, Commission staff agreed to pursue federal funds. At the time the pilot project was commencing, the U.S. Department of Education released a Request For Proposals (RFP) related to the quality of the teaching workforce. In cooperation with the pilot districts, the CCTC staff responded to the RFP and was awarded a grant of one million dollars. Over a three-year period, the funds cover expenses of the participants in an appropriate teacher preparation program. Expenses covered include: tuition and books, career and academic advisement, exam preparation costs, exam fees, and credential application fees.

The five regional Teacher Recruitment Centers can play an important role in assisting districts as they move emergency permit holders into appropriate credential programs. Each regional center can assure that their staff are knowledgeable about credentialing in California and about the program options available in the various universities and colleges. Credential technicians in school districts and county offices can counsel prospective teachers regarding the range of options for gaining credentials. University credential technicians and counselors can provide accurate information about program options about their own college or university. A need exists for credential “one stop shopping,” and the participants in the pilot project thought that Teacher Recruitment Centers were ideally positioned to provide this service.

Summary

An early analysis demonstrates that this pilot project has been successful in moving toward meeting the goal of eliminating or greatly reducing emergency permits. The two districts have shown that the use of emergency permits can be diminished in a relatively short period of time. The pilot project has identified five common strategies as listed in chart one. These strategies can be replicated in other districts that are high users of emergency permits and waivers.

The key to the early success of the joint effort was the district commitment, as a matter of policy and practice, to put a fully credentialed teacher in every classroom. This commitment was made by the school board, the superintendent and human resources personnel.

Commission staff worked to address each district's need as they were uncovered through intensive review of emergency permit holders. As needs surfaced, staff explored current state policy and practice and were able to adjust guidelines to better serve the current needs of districts.

The pilot project team of district and Commission staff will continue to meet on a regular basis. The team is planning to develop a user friendly guidebook to assist other districts in eliminating emergency permits. The team will develop and conduct technical assistance workshops for districts to be offered as early as spring 2002. In the coming months, the Commission staff will present an agenda item that summarizes all of the strategies that are being undertaken to reduce the use of emergency permits and waivers.